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Occupational Employment and Wages in New Orleans–Metairie – May 2017

Workers in the New Orleans-Metairie Metropolitan Statistical Area had an average (mean) hourly wage of \$20.82 in May 2017, about 14 percent below the nationwide average of \$24.34, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Assistant Commissioner for Regional Operations Stanley W. Suchman noted that, after testing for statistical significance, wages in the local area were lower than their respective national averages in 18 of the 22 major occupational groups, including computer and mathematical; protective service; and legal. Local wages were measurably higher than their respective national averages in two groups, including production, and were similar to the national averages in two additional occupational groups.

When compared to the nationwide distribution, local employment was more highly concentrated in 8 of the 22 occupational groups, including food preparation and serving related; healthcare practitioners and technical; and sales and related. Conversely, employment shares were significantly below their national representation in 11 groups, including computer and mathematical; production; and business and financial operations. (See [table A](#) and [box note](#) at end of release.)

Table A. Occupational employment and wages by major occupational group, United States and the New Orleans-Metairie Metropolitan Statistical Area, and measures of statistical significance, May 2017

Major occupational group	Percent of total employment			Mean hourly wage			
	United States	New Orleans		United States	New Orleans		Percent difference ⁽¹⁾
Total, all occupations	100.0	100.0		\$24.34	\$20.82	*	-14
Management	5.1	4.4	*	57.65	48.65	*	-16
Business and financial operations	5.2	4.0	*	36.70	30.19	*	-18
Computer and mathematical	3.0	1.4	*	43.18	32.19	*	-25
Architecture and engineering	1.8	1.7		41.44	43.31		5
Life, physical, and social science	0.8	0.6	*	35.76	32.10	*	-10
Community and social service	1.5	1.3	*	23.10	20.72	*	-10
Legal	0.8	1.0	*	51.62	40.71	*	-21
Education, training, and library	6.1	5.4	*	26.67	22.88	*	-14
Arts, design, entertainment, sports, and media	1.4	1.4		28.34	24.88	*	-12
Healthcare practitioners and technical	6.0	7.4	*	38.83	33.22	*	-14
Healthcare support	2.9	2.4	*	15.05	12.49	*	-17
Protective service	2.4	3.5	*	22.69	17.60	*	-22
Food preparation and serving related	9.3	11.8	*	11.88	10.11	*	-15
Building and grounds cleaning and maintenance	3.1	3.0		13.91	11.39	*	-18
Personal care and service	3.6	3.3	*	13.11	11.08	*	-15
Sales and related	10.2	11.5	*	19.56	15.96	*	-18
Office and administrative support	15.4	14.4	*	18.24	16.24	*	-11
Farming, fishing, and forestry	0.3	0.1	*	13.87	18.76	*	35

Note: See footnotes at end of table.

Table A. Occupational employment and wages by major occupational group, United States and the New Orleans-Metairie Metropolitan Statistical Area, and measures of statistical significance, May 2017 - Continued

Major occupational group	Percent of total employment			Mean hourly wage			
	United States	New Orleans		United States	New Orleans		Percent difference ⁽¹⁾
Construction and extraction.....	4.0	4.4	*	24.01	21.07	*	-12
Installation, maintenance, and repair	3.9	4.3	*	23.02	21.61	*	-6
Production	6.3	4.8	*	18.30	21.72	*	19
Transportation and material moving.....	7.0	7.8	*	17.82	18.61		4

Footnotes:

(1) A positive percent difference measures how much the mean wage in the New Orleans-Metairie Metropolitan Statistical Area is above the national mean wage, while a negative difference reflects a lower wage.

Note: * The percent share of employment or mean hourly wage for this area is significantly different from the national average of all areas at the 90-percent confidence level.

One occupational group—transportation and material moving—was chosen to illustrate the diversity of data available for any of the 22 major occupational categories. New Orleans had 43,330 jobs in transportation and material moving, accounting for 7.8 percent of local area employment, significantly higher than the 7.0-percent national share. The local average hourly wage for this occupational group was \$18.61, compared to the national average of \$17.82.

Some of the larger detailed occupations within the transportation and material moving group included hand laborers and freight, stock, and material movers (13,780), heavy and tractor-trailer truck drivers (5,360), and light truck or delivery services drivers (3,410). Among the higher-paying jobs were captains, mates, and pilots of water vessels, as well as ship engineers, with mean hourly wages of \$44.07 and \$41.50, respectively. At the lower end of the wage scale were parking lot attendants (\$9.74) and cleaners of vehicles and equipment (\$10.06). (Detailed occupational data for transportation and material moving workers are presented in [table 1](#); for a complete listing of all detailed occupations, see www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes_35380.htm.)

Location quotients allow us to explore the occupational make-up of a metropolitan area by comparing the composition of jobs in an area relative to the national average. (See [table 1](#).) For example, a location quotient of 2.0 indicates that an occupation accounts for twice the share of employment in the area than it does nationally. In the New Orleans metropolitan area, above average concentrations of employment were found in some of the occupations within the transportation and material moving group. For instance, sailors and marine oilers were employed at 22.9 times the national average in New Orleans, and captains, mates, and pilots of water vessels, at 20.6 times the U.S. rate. Two other local occupations had double-digit location quotients, tank car, truck, and ship loaders at 11.5, and ship engineers at 11.3. All four of these location quotients in New Orleans were among the highest in all metropolitan areas for these particular occupations. On the other hand, light truck or delivery services drivers had a location quotient of 1.0 in New Orleans, indicating that this occupation's local and national employment shares were similar.

These statistics are from the Occupational Employment Statistics (OES) survey, a federal-state cooperative program between BLS and State Workforce Agencies, in this case, the Louisiana Workforce Commission.

Notes on Occupational Employment Statistics Data

With the release of the May 2017 estimates, the OES program has replaced 21 detailed occupations found in the 2010 Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) with 10 new aggregations of those occupations. In addition, selected 4- and 5-digit North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) industries previously published by OES will no longer be published separately. Some of the 4-digit NAICS industries that are no longer being published separately will instead be published as OES-specific industry aggregations. More information about the new occupational and industry aggregations is available at www.bls.gov/oes/changes_2017.htm.

A value that is statistically different from another does not necessarily mean that the difference has economic or practical significance. Statistical significance is concerned with the ability to make confident statements about a universe based on a sample. It is entirely possible that a large difference between two values is not significantly different statistically, while a small difference is, since both the size and heterogeneity of the sample affect the relative error of the data being tested.

Technical Note

The Occupational Employment Statistics (OES) survey is a semiannual survey measuring occupational employment and wage rates for wage and salary workers in nonfarm establishments in the United States. The OES data available from BLS include cross-industry occupational employment and wage estimates for the nation; over 650 areas, including states and the District of Columbia, metropolitan statistical areas (MSAs), metropolitan divisions, nonmetropolitan areas, and territories; national industry-specific estimates at the NAICS sector, 3-, 4-, and selected 5- and 6-digit industry levels, and national estimates by ownership across all industries and for schools and hospitals. OES data are available at www.bls.gov/oes/tables.htm.

OES estimates are constructed from a sample of about 1.2 million establishments. Each year, two semiannual panels of approximately 200,000 sampled establishments are contacted, one panel in May and the other in November. Responses are obtained by mail, Internet or other electronic means, email, telephone, or personal visit. The May 2017 estimates are based on responses from six semiannual panels collected over a 3-year period: May 2017, November 2016, May 2016, November 2015, May 2015, and November 2014. The overall national response rate for the six panels, based on the 50 states and the District of Columbia, is 72 percent based on establishments and 68 percent based on weighted sampled employment. The unweighted sample employment of 82 million across all six semiannual panels represents approximately 58 percent of total national employment. The sample in the New Orleans-Metairie Metropolitan Statistical Area included 4,138 establishments with a response rate of 76 percent. For more information about OES concepts and methodology, go to www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes_tec.htm.

The May 2017 OES estimates are based on the 2010 Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) system and the 2017 North American Industry Classification System (NAICS). Information about the 2010 SOC is available on the BLS website at www.bls.gov/soc and information about the 2017 NAICS is available at www.bls.gov/naics.htm.

Metropolitan area definitions

The substate area data published in this release reflect the standards and definitions established by the U.S. Office of Management and Budget.

The **New Orleans-Metairie Metropolitan Statistical Area** includes Jefferson, Orleans, Plaquemines, St. Bernard, St. Charles, St. James, St. John the Baptist, and St. Tammany Parishes in Louisiana.

Additional information

OES data are available on our regional web page at www.bls.gov/regions/southwest. Answers to frequently asked questions about the OES data are available at www.bls.gov/oes/oes_ques.htm. Detailed technical information about the OES survey is available in our Survey Methods and Reliability Statement on the BLS website at www.bls.gov/oes/current/methods_statement.pdf.

Information in this release will be made available to sensory impaired individuals upon request. Voice phone: (202) 691-5200; Federal Relay Service: (800) 877-8339.

Table 1. Employment and wage data from the Occupational Employment Statistics survey, by occupation, New Orleans-Metairie Metropolitan Statistical Area, May 2017

Occupation ⁽¹⁾	Employment		Mean wages	
	Level ⁽²⁾	Location quotient ⁽³⁾	Hourly	Annual ⁽⁴⁾
Transportation and material moving occupations.....	43,330	1.1	\$18.61	\$38,720
Aircraft cargo handling supervisors.....	50	1.4	21.81	45,370
First-line supervisors of transportation and material moving workers, except aircraft cargo handling supervisors.....	2,070	1.4	25.86	53,790
Airline pilots, copilots, and flight engineers.....	40	0.1	(5)	98,050
Commercial pilots.....	120	0.8	(5)	61,910
Air traffic controllers.....	70	0.8	44.46	92,480
Ambulance drivers and attendants, except emergency medical technicians.....	50	0.8	12.70	26,410
Bus drivers, transit and intercity.....	(6)	(6)	16.94	35,240
Bus drivers, school or special client.....	1,490	0.8	13.34	27,760
Driver/sales workers.....	1,130	0.7	12.10	25,160
Heavy and tractor-trailer truck drivers.....	5,360	0.8	21.55	44,820
Light truck or delivery services drivers.....	3,410	1.0	17.70	36,810
Taxi drivers and chauffeurs.....	850	1.1	11.65	24,220
Motor vehicle operators, all other.....	70	0.3	21.82	45,380
Sailors and marine oilers.....	2,750	22.9	21.60	44,920
Captains, mates, and pilots of water vessels.....	2,850	20.6	44.07	91,660
Ship engineers.....	350	11.3	41.50	86,320
Bridge and lock tenders.....	100	8.1	15.40	32,030
Parking lot attendants.....	740	1.3	9.74	20,250
Automotive and watercraft service attendants.....	480	1.0	11.89	24,740
Traffic technicians.....	(6)	(6)	18.47	38,410
Transportation attendants, except flight attendants.....	(6)	(6)	13.39	27,840
Transportation workers, all other.....	450	3.0	13.72	28,540
Conveyor operators and tenders.....	160	1.6	(6)	(6)
Crane and tower operators.....	1,000	5.9	24.73	51,430
Excavating and loading machine and dragline operators.....	90	0.5	21.64	45,020
Industrial truck and tractor operators.....	1,550	0.7	16.50	34,310
Cleaners of vehicles and equipment.....	1,160	0.8	10.06	20,920
Laborers and freight, stock, and material movers, hand.....	13,780	1.3	13.07	27,180
Packers and packagers, hand.....	720	0.3	10.49	21,820
Refuse and recyclable material collectors.....	430	1.0	14.77	30,730
Tank car, truck, and ship loaders.....	460	11.5	21.11	43,910
Material moving workers, all other.....	130	1.3	18.11	37,660

Footnotes:

(1) For a complete listing of all detailed occupations in the New Orleans-Metairie Metropolitan Statistical Area, see www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes_35380.htm.

(2) Estimates for detailed occupations do not sum to the totals because the totals include occupations not shown separately. Estimates do not include self-employed workers.

(3) The location quotient is the ratio of the area concentration of occupational employment to the national average concentration. A location quotient greater than one indicates the occupation has a higher share of employment than average, and a location quotient less than one indicates the occupation is less prevalent in the area than average.

(4) Annual wages have been calculated by multiplying the hourly mean wage by a "year-round, full-time" hours figure of 2,080 hours; for those occupations where there is not an hourly mean wage published, the annual wage has been directly calculated from the reported survey data.

(5) Wages for some occupations that do not generally work year-round, full time, are reported either as hourly wages or annual salaries depending on how they are typically paid.

(6) Estimates not released.